

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### **Bushwacker, Inc.**

#### **Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership**

#### **Bushwacker Discovers Benefits Of Lean Manufacturing**

##### **Client Profile:**

Bushwacker, Inc., founded in 1968 in Portland, Oregon, is a manufacturer of fender flares and bed-rail caps for pickups and SUVs. The company is also an OEM supplier to Toyota and other automotive manufacturers. Bushwacker employs 40 people.

##### **Situation:**

Bushwacker's management attended a lean manufacturing seminar and realized the potential benefits of implementing lean manufacturing at the facility in Portland, Oregon. Eager to proceed, Bushwacker contacted the Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership (OMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for lean training.

##### **Solution:**

OMEP helped Bushwacker apply for and obtain a grant from the Portland Development Commission to offset the cost of the training. Next, OMEP presented the company with a training package consisting of three core modules: Principles of Lean Manufacturing, Value Stream Mapping, and 5S Workplace Organization. With this information, Bushwacker could begin implementation projects without additional assistance from OMEP. Over the course of one month, Bushwacker identified key areas for improvement, developed an improvement plan, and began implementation projects. OMEP made certain the training would benefit all of Bushwacker's primarily Russian-speaking workforce by involving every employee and providing interpretation when necessary. Bushwacker has since transformed its operations on the factory floor, making them safer, more efficient, and more profitable.

##### **Results:**

- \* Reduced finished goods inventory by 15 percent by running smaller batch sizes.
- \* Reduced set-up times by approximately 25 percent.
- \* Reduced work-in-process by eliminating a box department.
- \* Reclaimed approximately 1,000 square feet of office and factory floor space to be used for production.

##### **Testimonial:**

"We were convinced... a commitment to lean would pay off! We also decided that we didn't want to travel this road alone. We met the staff at the Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership and quickly set up a training schedule. Once we completed the training, the benefits of the program started to show immediately. Our production staff has eliminated a complete department. Implementing 5S throughout the organization has freed up valuable floor space and we have less congestion as a result. Our biggest challenge moving forward is to make lean thinking (the elimination of waste), a core piece of our corporate culture."

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Russ Morgan, President